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OUR INDIAN MISSIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



REV. CROSSBY.

BY REV. C. M. TATE

Missionary to the Indians,
Cowichan, B.C.

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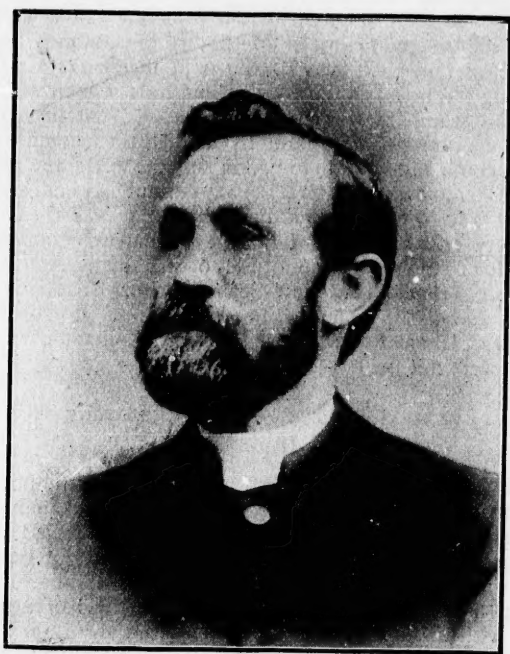
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Our Indian Missions
In
British Columbia.



REV. C. M. TATE.

*Missionary to the Indians, Cowichan, British Columbia. Supported
by the Epworth Leagues of St. Thomas District.*

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Our Indian Missions in British Columbia.

THE FIRST MISSIONARIES ENTERED FIFTY YEARS AGO.

FIFTY years seems a long time for young people to contemplate ; but to the pioneers of British Columbia it seems scarcely possible that it is nearly half a century since the first company of Methodist missionaries landed in Victoria, on their way to the gold regions of Cariboo, carrying the bread of life to the thousands of men who had gone in search of the shining nuggets. That little band of pioneer missionaries carefully studied their commission, which commanded them to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." They strenuously endeavored, in this land of magnificent distances, to preach the Gospel to every creature with whom they came in contact. In breaking to the hungry multitudes of Canadians, Americans, English, French, Germans, Scandinavians, Spaniards, and other European nationalities the bread of life, the negroes, Mexicans, Chilians, Kanakas. Chinamen and Indians were not neglected

REV. EBENEZER ROBSON, FIRST MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS.

To the Rev. Ebenezer Robson is ascribed the honor of establishing the first Methodist mission work among the Indians in British Columbia. In a little town called Hope, on the south bank of the Fraser River, about one hundred miles from the mouth, Bro. Robson found a number of Flat-head Indians amid the thralldom and cruelties of heathenism, with which the "dark places of the earth are filled." A number of the children were gathered into the parsonage for a day-school, and some of them, now grown to be old men and women, still speak of their first lessons in civilization and Christianity as taught in Bro. Robson's school.

But, in the rearrangement of the work on the district, Bro. Robson was moved to Nanaimo, and found besides the English coal miners, employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, a large number of Indians of the same nationality as those at Hope, and just as much benighted. A

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little mission hall was soon opened for them, and Kookshun, who had learned a little English from the Hudson's Bay Company servants, was employed as interpreter. Kookshun was the first native convert in British Columbia, and his name was changed to Cushman. After his conversion Cushman was employed as class-leader and local preacher, as well as interpreter, and for upwards of thirty years he ministered not only to his own people at Nanaimo, but at the Fraser River and among the Chemainus tribes. He died at Nanaimo in the triumphs of faith in the year 1896.

THE WORK BEGUN AT NANAIMO—OUR FIRST INDIAN CHURCH.

When the Nanaimo Indians were removed from the town to the site of their present village, Bro. Robson erected the first Indian church in connection with British Columbia Methodism.

This work was carried on successfully by Dr. Evans and Rev. E. White, in connection with their English ministry, assisted in a marked degree by Cornelius Bryant, an active lay worker, who afterwards became one of our ministers, and spent a number of years in faithful service among both whites and Indians.

It was at the Nanaimo Indian mission that Thomas Crosby commenced his life of usefulness, as a teacher in the mission day-school. In about six months Bro. Crosby had acquired sufficient of the native language to enable him to converse with the people, and with a burning desire for the salvation of souls, it was not long before a number of the scholars in his school were converted, among whom were such noble characters as David Salloselton and Solomon Sewell.

In 1871 Bro. Crosby was ordained to the office and work of the Christian ministry, by Dr. Morley Punshon, who, as President of the Toronto Conference, with which the British Columbia District was connected, was visiting the missions throughout the Province.

David Salloselton was converted at the age of fifteen, and although but a boy he went out at the Master's call and preached the Gospel to his fellow-countrymen wherever he had opportunity, and with so much eloquence and power that Dr. Punshon declared him to be one of the greatest, natural orators whom he had ever heard. Not only was he gifted with speech, but he was also a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and in his short life he was instrumental

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in leading many souls to the Saviour. He died in the city of Victoria, where he was studying English, and receiving a theological training under the Rev. W. Pollard, in 1872, and was buried at Nanaimo amid a host of sorrowing friends, both Indian and white. Although it is now thirty years since he died, his name is still "fragrant as ointment poured forth."

Under the direction of Dr. Punshon, Charles Montgomery Tate took charge of the day-school at Nanaimo in May, 1871, and before the end of the year had learned the Indian language. He soon began to take regular appointments among the Nanaimo Indians, and to itinerate among the various tribes along the east coast of Vancouver Island, as far as Saanich and Victoria.

THE GREAT REVIVAL AT VICTORIA IN 1873.

A Mother's Prayer—A Chief's Conversion.

In the winter of 1873 the Rev. W. Pollard, Chairman of the District, asked Mr. Tate to close his school at Nanaimo, and take charge of the revival work among the Indians at Victoria, where some of the laymen belonging to the Pandora Methodist Church had rented a vacant saloon on Government Street, and fitted it up for an Indian church, then gathered in the degraded Indians off the streets. Their faithful work was soon rewarded, and a number of the Victoria Indians were converted, among whom was Amos Sahalton, who was chosen leader. Soon the work spread, not only among the Lukwummin of Victoria, but also among the hundreds of northern Indians who were encamped at Victoria. One of the first of those northern Indians to be converted was Mrs. Lawson, the wife of a white man, and who is called the mother of Methodism among the Tsimshean tribes. On the night of her conversion she commenced to pray for her son, Alfred Dudoire, one of the chiefs at Port Simpson, six hundred miles north. In three weeks he arrived in Victoria in a large war canoe capable of carrying three or four tons. He was not at all pleased with the state of affairs, and set about testing the new converts, but in the operation he himself was converted, and the next morning wanted to take Brother Tate in his canoe, and start for home to tell his people the glad tidings of salvation. But, as Brother Tate could not leave the work, he advised Alfred to go himself, which he did, taking some of the new converts with him, and instead of carrying a cargo of rum, which he intended, he took Bibles

and hymn-books, wherewith to carry on the work of God among his people.

William Henry Pierce was also one of the converts during this wonderful revival, and after a few weeks' training at the old Nanaimo mission with Brother Tate, he also went north to assist in the work of God at Port Simpson.

PORT SIMPSON MISSION—BEGUN, 1874.

Its Wonderful History.

Two months after Alfred started for his home, the chairman received word from the Mission Rooms that Mr. Crosby had been appointed to the mission at Port Simpson, but as he was then in the East on missionary work, Mr. Tate was sent to carry on the work till he arrived. Accordingly, on the 1st of April, 1874, Brother Tate left Brother Cushan in charge of his work at Nanaimo, and took passage on the Hudson's Bay Co.'s steamer *Otter*, and three days after was landed on the beach at Fort Simpson, amid flying colors and booming cannon, followed by an hour of hand-shaking never to be forgotten, for the whole tribe had flocked to the beach to give the missionary a hearty welcome. The Hudson's Bay Co.'s trader, Mr. C. F. Morison, kindly took him to his home in the Fort, where he was treated with the greatest hospitality, and every assistance given him in his church and school work.

The frame of a large Indian house was bought from one of the people, and moved from the island to the present site of the mission premises, where it was re-erected. This was intended for church and schoolhouse until something better could be built, but the work was slow on account of there being so many other duties to perform. Yet when Brother Crosby arrived to take charge of the mission, on the 30th of June, 1874, not only was this building ready for the roof, but regular preaching services had been established in the house of Chief Skowgwade, together with class and prayer-meetings, and a blessed work of awakening was in progress.

It was Brother Crosby's privilege to see the wonderful development of this work, when all that belonged to heathenism was uprooted, and the old Indian lodge gave place to tasty little cottages, with fine streets paved with sand and shells, which the women carried up from the beach as their part in beautifying their surroundings, counting it all joy thus to offer their voluntary labor, considering that in the days of darkness they were compelled to be the

burden bearers—the veritable “hewers of wood and drawers of water.”

There is no space to tell of the wonderful canoe trips which Brother Crosby took over stormy seas, amid pelting rains, to reach the benighted tribes of that northern coast; but the record to-day is a civilized people, living in beautiful villages, receiving no Government help except small grants towards the maintenance of their day schools. Another record is kept on high, and is composed of a great host of those once savage people, now before the Throne, “washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.”

SOME OF THE PORT SIMPSON CONVERTS.

The First Mission in Alaska.

In a short time after the inauguration of the Port Simpson mission a number of young men were converted, and these in turn became missionaries, holding regular services in their hunting and fishing camps, as well as preaching Christ to their fellow countrymen in the neighboring villages. Phillip McKay, Patrick Russ, and Adam Clarke were among the first converts, and did good work for the Master—Phillip becoming the first missionary to Alaska, and with the assistance of Bro. Crosby organized an important work among the Stikine Indians, which was afterwards handed over to the American Presbyterian Church, under the superintendence of Dr. Sheldon Jackson.

Patrick Russ has labored at different points along the coast, and is still engaged as a native agent. Adam Clarke carefully saved his little earnings, and built himself a comfortable house, reserving the best room for the purpose of a class-room, he being a classleader till the time of his death; and with his last breath requested that the class be continued at his house. William Henry Pierce has pioneered a number of our Northern missions, and is now an ordained minister, stationed at the Upper Skeena, who with our highly esteemed, and energetic medical missionary, Dr. Wrinch, is accomplishing a good work on that isolated field.

DR. BOLTON—THE PIONEER MEDICAL MISSIONARY.

Port Simpson Missionaries.

The self-denying labors of our beloved brother, Dr. Bolton, cannot be measured within the compass of this article. At his own expense he came to this province, impelled by a burning love for the bodies and souls of the

aborigines of this land. For many years he has stood side by side with our missionaries at Port Simpson and Port Essington, where he has established hospitals for the relief of not only the suffering Indians, but also for the white people, and where also the Chinese and Japanese are treated.*

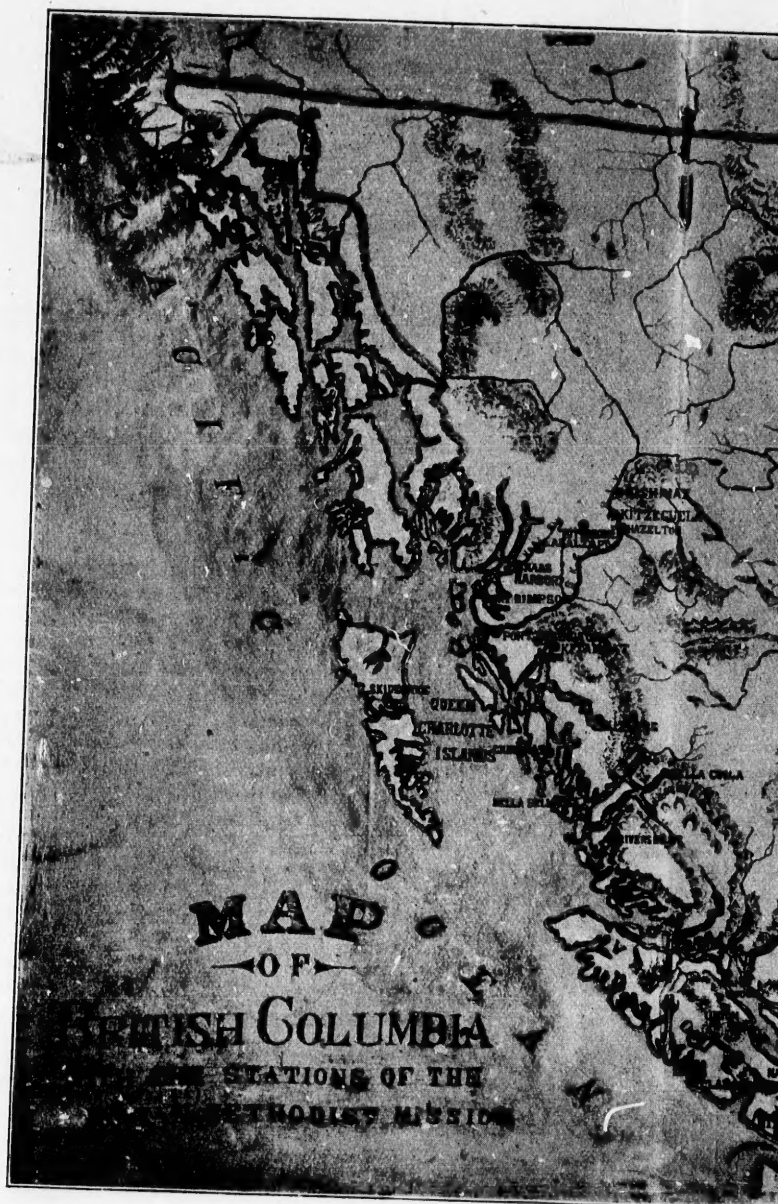
Amid the changes of the itinerancy during more recent years, Bros. Tate, Green, Jennings and S. S. Osterhout have supplied Port Simpson, and the present missionary is Rev. B. C. Freeman. The missionary workers, besides those already mentioned, are Mr. C. M. Richards, principal of the Boy's Home; Misses Clarke, Alton, Paul and Elliott in the Girls' Home. Mr. Richards, principal of the Boys' Home, has faithfully and efficiently fulfilled his duties in that institution; and now, we are glad to note, that Miss Burpee, so long connected with the "Coqualeetza Institute," has been appointed matron. At the Hospital Dr. Bolton was blest with efficient help in the person of Miss Spence, a trained nurse of many years' experience.

THE NAAS RIVER MISSION.

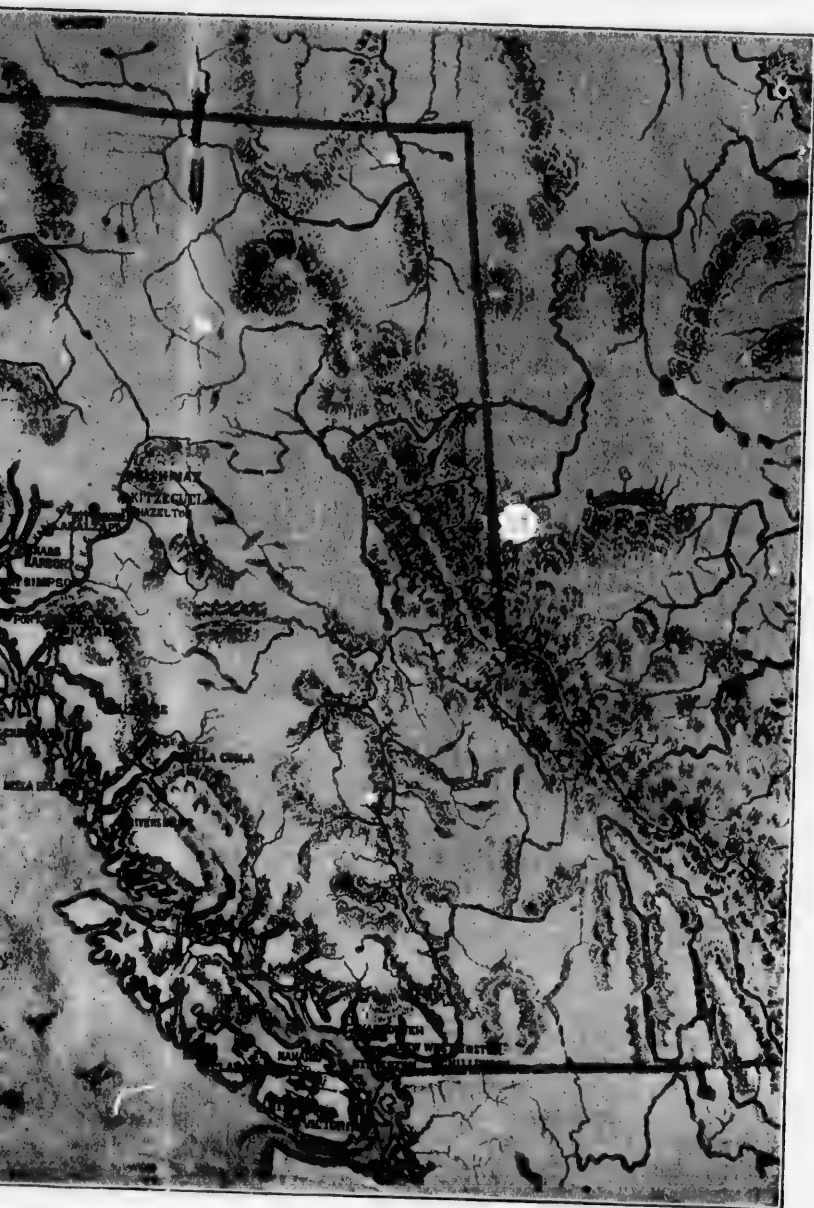
Naas River was for some time an outpost of Port Simpson, and was frequently visited by Bro. Crosby; but we will have to return to Victoria in order to get the facts concerning the establishment of the mission: Father McKay, one of the founders of the Victoria Indian Mission, carried on for a number of years a Saturday night prayer-meeting, and whenever the Indian missionaries were in Victoria for a few days, they generally found their way to Father McKay's prayer-meeting, and when men like Crosby, and Green met in this sanctified place, the one to tell of the Macedonian cry from Naas River, and the other to say "Here am I, Lord, send me," it was not long before it was arranged that Bro. Green should be the first missionary to Naas. But, as this was arranged without the concurrence of the General Board, what about the salary for the young man? This difficulty was soon overcome by the members of that prayer-meeting putting their hands in their pockets, and supplying all that was needed. Some years of faithful work on the part of Bro. Green resulted in many striking conversions.

It was at Naas River that Bro. Osterhout commenced his missionary career, and acquired the Niskah language, which is a dialect of the Tsimpshian. Dr. Rush energeti-

*Since this was written Dr. Bolton has moved to Victoria, and Dr. Kergin has charge of Port Simpson Hospital.



INDIAN MISSIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—THE MET



BRITISH COLUMBIA—THE METHODIST CHURCH, CANADA.

cally took hold of the work at this point, and was very successful, but on account of failing health was compelled to return to Ontario. Rev. R. A. Spencer followed Dr. Rush, but on account of the ill health of his family, regretfully gave up the work. A worker is now needed for this mission.

BELLA BELLA MISSION—BEGUN 1880.

An Indian's Faith.

The Bella Bella mission also had its birth in Victoria when, under the labors of Miss Pollard, Jack (now Arthur Ebbstone) and George Blucher were led to the Saviour, and afterwards returned to their homes to witness for Jesus. Jack's first work was to erect a flagstaff, and every Sabbath morning he raised his little flag to let the people know that it was the Lord's Day. The chiefs were annoyed at this and told Jack that if he wanted to be a Christian he must go back to Victoria, for if he stayed there and tried to preach his religion they would kill him. But whilst Jack was not allowed to speak in the village, every Sabbath day he took his Bible and spent the day on the side of the mountain. He reverently turned over the leaves in the book—for he could not read a word of it—then looking up to Heaven he would say, "Father, this word has saved me and I know it can save my brother Indians, but they will not listen to me. Lord, send the missionary who can read the book to them, for I know they will hear him."

One day Jack was overjoyed to see a canoe come around the point of the bay with a flag flying at the stern, for he knew at once that this was the missionary coming in answer to his prayers. The Indians listened to Bro. Crosby tell the gospel story, and Bro. Pierce was left at Bella Bella to open a day school and carry on religious services. On the 22nd of October, 1880, Bro. Tate arrived to take charge of the mission, in company with Bro. Crosby, Chairman of the District. They had with them sufficient lumber to erect a mission house and a school house. The chairman stayed a few days and helped to get the buildings started. He left two native carpenters from Port Simpson to assist Bro. Tate, as the Bella Bellas knew nothing about building a white man's house. On the 30th October a dedicatory service was held in the school house, as it was to be used for church services also.

After four years of hard toil at Bella Bella, Bro. Tate had the satisfaction of seeing over one hundred souls converted

to God, and the material aspect of the village entirely changed. Bella Coola, Rivers Inlet and China Hat, now separate missions, were then appointments of Bella Bella, reached by long, hazardous canoe trips. On Bro. Tate's removal to the Fraser mission, Rev. W. B. Cuyler was appointed, but within two years the Master saw fit to take him home. In 1886 Bro. Calvert took charge of the work, and after one year of arduous toil was succeeded by Bro. Bryant. In 1888 Bro. Beavis took charge of the work and maintained it for three years; then again for two years, 1893-5; Bro. Hopkins supplied from 1891-3. From 1895-7 the mission was supplied by the chairman, when Dr. Jackson took charge and supplied for one year. In 1898 Dr. Large was appointed, and from that time to the present has been in labors abundant, he having undertaken the removal of the mission to a new site. In the spring the Indians move to Goose Island for the purpose of seal hunting, and in the summer to Rivers Inlet and Namu to work at the salmon canneries. The missionary has to accompany his people to both of these places, so that the village is practically deserted during the summer. Under the direction of Dr. Large a hospital has been built at Bella Bella. We have also a hospital at Rivers Inlet, built by Dr. Bolton. The W. M. S. has supplied an efficient nurse in the person of Miss Kissack.

At Rivers Inlet there is a small tribe of Indians, and Bro. Patrick Russ is the present missionary.

CHINA HAT.

Jim Starr's Work.

About the same time that Jack was converted, the Rev. Thomas Derrick had the pleasure of seeing a stalwart northern Indian, named Jim Starr, converted in the little Indian church at Granville, now the City of Vancouver. This man immediately returned to his home at China Hat, and endeavored to preach to his people. He went to the woods and hewed out material to build a little church, then took a canoe trip of nearly 200 miles to Port Simpson, in order to get some nails wherewith to put it together. Bro. Crosby kindly supplied him with nails, and afterwards visited him at his home, where he found him doing faithful work for the Master. When the mission was organized at Bella Bella Jim and some of his friends moved from China Hat, and all through the years he has lived a faithful,

devoted Christian life. China Hat is at present supplied by George Edgar, a native convert from Port Simpson, whose energetic, faithful labors have been rewarded by seeing souls brought to the Saviour and the erection of new mission buildings.

BELLA COOLA.

Bella Coola was supplied by Bro. and Sister Nicholas from 1890 to 1894, when Bro. T. Neville took charge and also remained four years. Bro. J. C. Spencer, M.D., is the present missionary.

SKIDEGATE, QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS.

Skidegate is the most isolated of our Indian missions. The good work accomplished on this mission also had its origin at Victoria when, under the labors of Miss Pollard, Amos Russ was converted, and returned to his home as a preacher of the gospel. Some time afterwards he married one of the brightest girls in the Crosby Home, and together they have labored faithfully for the Master, giving great assistance to the several missionaries who have been appointed to that charge. Bro. Geo. Robinson was the first resident missionary, who, after two years' faithful work, was relieved by Bro. Hopkins, who remained four years, 1884-8. Bro. A. N. Miller was the next missionary, who, having taken to himself a helpmeet, in the person of Miss Reinhart, one of our most successful teachers, from Bella Bella, also spent four years on this isolated field. From 1893 to the present year, Bro. B. C. Freeman has successfully developed this mission. In June, he was transferred to Port Simpson. The little outlying villages of Clue and Gold Harbor have both moved to Skidegate, thus making the work somewhat easier for the missionary.

KITAMAAT.

Miss Susanna Lawrence, First Missionary.

Kitamaat was an outpost of Port Simpson, and supplied by native agents up till 1882, when Miss Susanna Lawrence volunteered to take charge. To reach the field she had to take a 150 mile journey in a canoe with the Indians, sleeping on the rocky beach for several nights. When visiting her in the "Home for Incurables" at Toronto a short time ago, we reminded her of the hardships of her missionary life compared with the comforts of the home she was now



REV. E. ROBSON, D.D.

Who began the work among the Indians in British Columbia.

in. She immediately replied, "I would rather be sleeping on the rocks and leading souls to Christ." From 1884 to 1893 the work was supplied by Bros. Robinson and Anderson, when the present missionary, Rev. G. H. Raley took charge. Bro. Raley has done much to give permanency to the work by establishing a boarding school and erecting substantial buildings.

Kitlope is an out-station in connection with the Kitamaat mission and has been supplied by native agents. If the people could be induced to move to Kitamaat, it would be much better for all concerned.

PORT ESSINGTON—ITS CANNERIES.

Essington, like Kitamaat, was supplied by native agents up till 1883, when Rev. D. Jennings was stationed there, and after five years of pioneer work was succeeded by Rev. G. F. Hopkins in 1888. Bro. Jennings again took charge in 1891, and has remained there up to the present time. Essington is twelve miles from the mouth of the Skeena River, and is a very important centre all through the summer months on account of the salmon canning industry. The Indians congregate there from all parts of the northern country, and most of the missionaries accompany their people.

CAPE MUDGE—A HARD FIELD.

Cape Mudge was occupied by our Society in 1893, with Bro. Galloway as missionary teacher. Mr. Walker is the present missionary teacher. It is one of our most difficult fields, as the Indians are so bound up in their heathen customs.

NITINAT, WEST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND.

Nitinat first appears on the minutes of our Conference in 1893, when Bro. Stone was sent from Naas River to open up the work at that point. Here, too, the degrading practices of heathenism keep the people in a demoralized condition, although several have been converted, and the work begins to look more hopeful.

CLAOQUAHT WITHOUT A MISSIONARY.

Claoquaht was taken up with bright prospects in the year 1897, with Rev. C. M. Tate as missionary. Although paganism was rank and the people were literally soaked in whiskey, yet before the end of the year there was such a

marked change in the moral atmosphere of the village that a case of intoxication was seldom seen, and five or six had been converted, publicly confessing Christ and declaring their intention to live a new life. In 1898 the work was left without a supply, and when Dr. Service was appointed in 1899 the good impressions had been smothered and the work had assumed a very discouraging nature. At the end of Dr. Service's second year, he was transferred to the work in West China. A large number of the Claoquaht Indians were at the Fraser River canneries last year, and most earnestly again asked for a missionary.

THE EAST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND INDIANS— COWICHAN.

This mission was organized by Bro. Tate in 1894, with headquarters at Victoria. Monthly visits were made to Nanaimo, Cowichan and other places along the coast. In 1895 Rev. J. C. Spencer was sent to Cowichan to assist Bro. Tate. In 1897 Bro. Crosby was sent to the East Coast Mission, and in 1898 the assistant was withdrawn from Cowichan. In 1899 the East Coast Mission was divided into three, viz., Victoria, Nanaimo, and Cowichan. Bro. W. H. Gibson is the missionary at Victoria, and Bro. E. Nichols at Nanaimo. Cowichan has been supplied by Bro. Tate for the past four years, and a good work has been accomplished. When the mission is equipped with a school and churches, it will compare favorably with the best of our Indian missions. There are about 1,200 Indians on this field, and nearly all are pagan.

A CHIEF'S PREPARATION FOR A MISSIONARY.

Nootka has appeared on our minutes, but a missionary has never been sent to that point. One of the chiefs said last year: "I have built a new house and am prepared to hand it over to the missionary as soon as he arrives, but if you want to save the remnant of our people you will have to come soon, for the devil is getting in his death-work quick and we will soon be gone."

CHILLIWACK—THE COQUALEETZA HOME.

Chilliwack is headquarters of the Fraser River Indian Mission. Its commencement was largely due to the heroic efforts of the Rev. E. White, and for a number of years was

carried on in connection with the white work on the Chilliwack and Sumas circuits. In 1871 it became part of the Indian Tribes Mission, with Rev. T. Crosby as missionary. This field encompassed all the tribes speaking the Anka-meenum tongues. In the fall of 1874 Bro. Tate took charge of this mission, and found a membership at Chilliwack of 54, with three churches. In 1877 our membership ran up to 220, which included 93 in Washington State, and which were handed over to the M. E. Church when they sent a missionary to that field. In 1880 Bro. Tate was sent north to open up some new work, and when he returned in 1884 he found the great majority of the people had been faithful, but a few had fallen away. A day school was maintained for some time, but on account of the scattered condition of the people it was impossible to accomplish much. In 1886 several children were taken into the mission house and a boarding school established, Mrs. Tate officiating as matron, seamstress, cook and teacher, as there were no funds wherewith to employ an assistant. In 1887 the Women's Missionary Society made a grant of \$400 towards the maintenance of the school, and in 1888 the same society built the Coqualeetza Home, at a cost of \$3,500, and also sent out from Nova Scotia Miss Elderkin as matron. In 1889 the staff was increased to three, viz., Miss Clarke, matron; Miss Elderkin, teacher; and Miss Somers, seamstress. In 1891 the school building was destroyed by fire, and for two years both children and teachers were accommodated at the mission house until the new building was completed, the present Coqualeetza Institute, with accommodation for 100 pupils and a staff of 10 teachers.

FORWARD MOVEMENT NECESSITIES

The *Missionary Bulletin* is a necessity to the Missionary Committee. It is needed to help enrich the Monthly Missionary Meeting and assist the Missionary Study Class. Anyone who wishes to keep in continual and close touch with the mission work in West China, Japan, and among the Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia, the Indians and Galicians, the Domestic and French work, may do so by subscribing for the *Missionary Bulletin*, 60 cents per year. This publication contains quarterly letters from over forty missionaries.

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